



NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD

# NEWS RELEASE

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NEBRASKA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD  
ANNOUNCES NEW STATE COMMAND  
SERGEANT MAJOR

RELEASED BY  
LTC BOB VRANA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LINCOLN, Neb. – A longtime Nebraska Army National Guard Soldier has been named to the state's highest enlisted Soldier position.

Command Sgt. Maj. Eli Valenzuela, who has served as a Nebraska Army National Guard Soldier since his enlistment into the organization in 1979, was selected to become the Nebraska Army National Guard's state command sergeant major, Brig. Gen. Judd Lyons, Nebraska adjutant general, announced today.

Valenzuela will assume his new post from departing Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Burch, who was recently selected to become the top Army National Guard command sergeant major in the nation, during a ceremony scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 7, at the Spirit of 1776 armory in Lincoln, Neb.

"Command Sergeant Major Valenzuela is the consummate senior noncommissioned officer," said Lyons. "He brings a depth and breadth of experience that is unmatched. He has served in noncommissioned officer leadership positions throughout his career at all levels of command including service supporting units across the state as a first sergeant, battalion command sergeant major and brigade command sergeant major."

As the top command sergeant major, Valenzuela will serve as the primary advocate for enlisted personnel concerns for the Nebraska National Guard's enlisted force.

Valenzuela said he is honored to be selected as the state's top enlisted Soldier.

"It's a culmination of a career spanning 30 years in all levels of responsibility coming up through the ranks," said Valenzuela. "I feel fortunate to have been selected as the state command sergeant major given the number of great candidates we do have out there."

"I'm honored and touched to receive that appointment," he added.

Valenzuela enlisted in the Nebraska Army National Guard in September 1979 and attended Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Sill, Okla. During his time in the military he has served as an artilleryman, signalman, instructor, drill sergeant and military policeman.

In December 2002 Valenzuela deployed to Bosnia- Herzegovina in support of Operation Joint Forge. Upon his return, in February 2004, Valenzuela was appointed as the command sergeant major of the 168th Quartermaster Battalion.

In June 2006 Valenzuela and the 867th Quartermaster Battalion deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The unit was transformed into a corps support battalion comprised of six Army National Guard and Army Reserve companies and four active Army companies. Valenzuela was responsible for the health and welfare of the over 1,600 Soldiers who made up the corps support battalion.

In January 2008 Valenzuela was selected as the command sergeant major of the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade in Lincoln, Neb.

Command Sgt. Maj. Valenzuela also holds the distinction of being the first Hispanic Command Sergeant Major in the Nebraska National Guard.

Lyons said Valenzuela's leadership experience and how he has handled the responsibility of caring for the enlisted force throughout his career are truly remarkable.

"Command Sergeant Major Valenzuela epitomizes the values most desired in our leaders," said Lyons. "Loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honesty, integrity and personal courage are more than words to him. He has focused his energy over the course of his career to teach, coach and mentor his subordinates, peers and leaders. Command Sergeant Major Valenzuela will be sharply focused on Soldier and Airman welfare and readiness. Furthermore, he cares deeply about family and employer needs as we continue to call upon their loved ones and employees."

Valenzuela's civilian occupation was also one of public service. He is a retired Nebraska State Trooper with over 25 years of service. His State Patrol assignments over the last 25 years have included the Traffic Division, the Nebraska State Patrol Training Academy and the Executive Protection Detail. Valenzuela is a 2001 graduate of Concordia University and holds a Bachelors of Arts Degree in Organizational Management.

Valenzuela and his wife, Faye, currently reside in Seward, Nebraska. They have two adult daughters Diane and Brittney (Poppe), son-in law, Jason Poppe and grandson, Korey William Poppe.